

The Nature and the qualities of the Dhamma

The sublime truth that the Buddha explained is the nature of the world. It is not the Buddha's creation or device, it is a discovery. Whether a Buddha appeared or not in the world this truth is there. More and more we listen to the Dhamma what the Buddha taught, we can understand about the nature of the world. Furthermore, if we can practice it, we can live in the world overcoming suffering. And the Buddha said very clearly "My discovery is an ancient path. I discovered and realized the path that the previous Buddhas also discovered and realized." Although we say Buddhism or the Buddha's message, actually this message doesn't belong to even the Buddha. We can name it as '**The sublime truth**'. We respect and pay our gratitude to the Buddha because he enlightened himself without any guideline of another master and preached it to the world kindly. Meanwhile, the supreme Buddha never hoped that we should worship or respect him. The real way that we respect and pay our gratitude to the Buddha is practicing this message as it is. For that we have to fulfill three steps, which are listening to this message, reflecting on it and practicing meditation.

When we are going to listen to the Buddha's message it is important to understand the nature and qualities of the Dhamma . According to the discourses in Buddhism, it is said there are six qualities of the Dhamma.

*"Svakkhato bhagavata dhammo sanditthiko akaliko ehipassiko
opanaiko paccattam veditabbo vinnuhi."*

- *Svakkhato* :- well expounded
- *Sanditthiko* :- directly visible
- *Akaliko* :- immediately effective
- *ehipassiko* :- suitable for calling one to come and see
- *opanaiko* :- leading onwards
- *paccattam veditabbo vinnuhi* :- to be personally realized by the wise

The Dhamma is well expounded by the Buddha. Whole parts which are the beginning, middle and the end in his teaching are well expounded. The beginning is virtue (*seela*), the middle is tranquility (*samadhi*) and the end is wisdom (*panna*). These three parts have been expounded well. It is described gradually from known to unknown. Therefore it is very clear. If we have clear comprehension, we are able to understand it and practice it as our courage.

The second quality of the Dhamma is directly visible. If we practice it honestly and wisely with loving kindness, we can see the results in this life not only here after because the path is clear.

Furthermore, we can see the Dhamma is immediately effective. The results don't take a long time. As much as we practice the Dhamma, we can purify our mind from negative feelings such as anger, desire and delusion, that means suffering, sorrow, lamentation, gradually cease from our mind.

In addition the Buddha's message says us '**come and see**' that is one of the especial qualities in the Dhamma. Buddhism never says '**come and believe**'. According to our level of knowledge and effort, we can listen to it, practice it and see the results in our life.

Also 'leading onwards' is one of the qualities in the Dhamma. It means when we practice the Dhamma, the results can be seen from within not from outside. It is like a mirror. When we go to the mirror, we can see our figure or shape likewise when we practice this message we can see the purification of our mind. It is our own experience. It doesn't need to go elsewhere to see the results.

Finally the Dhamma is to be personally realized by the wise. We must have some kind of intelligence to listen, practice and see the result of the Dhamma. It doesn't mean that we must have educational qualifications. We must have some level of intelligence to understand the impermanence what Buddhism explains.

Seeing these qualities in the Dhamma we have to listen to the Buddha with good attention. The Buddha points out the two paths, those are the path to a good life and the path to enlightenment. First he explains how do we overcome hell and reach to the human realm or divine realm again. For that we have to overcome evil and fulfill meritorious deeds. Here Buddhism says us the importance of practicing generosity, practicing morality and practicing meditation. As much as we can practice these meritorious deeds in our lives, we are able to overcome mental sufferings and live with happiness.

The second path that he explains is the path to purification or enlightenment. For that we have to fulfill three disciplines such as virtue, tranquility and wisdom. At the very beginning on this path we have to understand about impermanence. We get experience through our senses like eyes, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. This experience arises at the moment with conditions. When conditions are together we get experience at the moment, instantly when conditions separate, the experience ceases without remaining anything. Although the nature of our experience is like this, because of our ignorance, we think that after experience is still happening. This is the cause of suffering. If somebody has this knowledge, he has to reflect on it again and again for more understanding, every moment from morning to night. And with this knowledge to overcome suffering, we are going to practice the real path with three steps that are virtue, tranquility and wisdom. Virtue means discipline in speech and behavior. Tranquility means to quiet our mind using meditation techniques such as breathing meditation, loving kindness meditation etc. Simultaneously we have to practice mindfulness. It can be practiced in four ways such as contemplation of body, contemplation of feelings, contemplation of consciousness and contemplation of mental formations. When we practice our mind again and again, we are able to keep our mind pure and calm even in a complex environment or situation with suffering. With this pure mind if we can practice impermanence, see arising and ceasing, we see impermanence permanently. Then we do all things seeing impermanence, mindfully. It means no body can disturb our peace of mind. Nobody can steal our good qualities which we earned hard in our long history of Sansaric journey.

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